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Aloari took over the post of *aek* by dint of personality and not by regular succession. Even if Jawaku had died, Aloari would not have been a logical heir. Manifestly, patrilineality was very fluid. 622

Conflict

In cases of interpersonal strife in the village, there was no mediator. The chief usually dissociated himself from these arguments and let the litigants shout it out. Maibu, described by Quain as a happy extrovert and a secure person, was involved in few personal quarrels. He did have occasional difficulties in discharging his office. For instance, Tun and Aloari refused to help build Quain's house on the grounds that he was only a *camara*, or person of low status. There then ensued a loud argument in the village plaza between Aloari and Maibu in which each tried to shout the other down. The men sat around and watched in bored amusement. Finally, to break it up, they tried to get Quain to sing. When Maibu grew weary and retired, Aloari continued to talk, but was greeted with hoots of derision. 578 622 626 [123]

Aloari was continually embroiled with the other villagers. He refused to finish thatching his house for the rainy season because he wanted the community to move to an old village site where there were fewer insects. His protests were to no avail. The village remained where it was.

Protests against the chief or the village as a whole did not often result in open conflict. For the most part, they were expressed by grumbling, non-compliance, and threats to leave. No action except ridicule was taken against dissidents. Disputes usually took the form of shouted arguments in the evening men's circle. The closest approximation to the use of force was a mock wrestling match between the disputants, in which light slaps and holds were mixed with talk. During one argument, a club was waved. 622 578 [626] [526]

Unwarranted use of force was regarded as a serious offense. Quain learned this at first hand after he had been among the Trumaí for two and a half months and had established excellent relations with them. When Autsuki, an adolescent boy, who had been told not to take any flour from a sack in Quain's house, persisted in doing so, Quain knocked the flour from his hand. Autsuki left the house, laughing derisively. Instantly, however, the entire village was astir. The men gathered in the plaza for a serious discussion. The boy's *wawes* (mother's brothers) came to Quain's house to demand an explanation, as did the chief. Fortunately, except for his pride, Autsuki was not hurt, and the matter was allowed to drop. Maibu, however, seeing that Quain was still annoyed, invited him to come into the center of the village and make a speech in his native tongue, the standard Trumaí escape-valve. 123 578 626 [154]

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626 828 154 On these occasions the men usually unburdened themselves in the village center. Malice was expressed either by a verbal interchange with the opponent or an angry speech. The substance of the latter type of demonstration often was not related to the cause of the dispute or to the speaker's discontent. Manifestly, the function of the harangue was to provide an emotional outlet rather than a forum. Maibu's suggestion that Quain should make a speech in his own language underlines the fact that the externalization of anger was the paramount purpose.

154 626 123 Emotional release could also be found in contrived performances. Quain, feeling depressed one evening, refused to sing when the Trumaí asked him to. However, when Maibu proposed a mock argument, Quain, being a good ethnologist, complied. Facing each other in the village center, the two men hurled epithets and insults at each other at the top of their voices. When Quain was at a loss for something to say, Maibu suggested that he repeat a speech he had made about the theft of his supplies. At the conclusion Quain reported, "I felt very good when I shouted at him for a while, and I was quite willing to sing."

683 692 In cases of physical harm, settlement could be obtained by paying the injured person. Quain was told that after the spear-throwing contest, the Kamayurá and the Trumaí each paid indemnities for bruises inflicted.[9] No case of physical violence was observed by Quain, but when [173] he slapped the flour from the boy's hand, and again when he stepped on a child's foot, the Trumaí suggested that he pay something. The latter case was an obvious attempt at petty extortion, for a week later the same child had his foot stepped on by a Trumaí, but this time the only result was an admonition from his father to be quiet.

626 954 [186] Still another alternative to violence was found in witchcraft. Only one or two Trumaí knew the practice of sorcery, and these men were said to have learned it from the Nahukwa, who were much feared because of their dangerous skill. Sorcery was usually invoked covertly, but at least once in an argument its use was openly threatened. This, however, was regarded as a most reprehensible action.

578 154 The chief source of conflict in the village was sex. Quarrels over who was to marry the three available women raged throughout Quain's stay. Bride-capture, the large percentage of older women, and polygamy combined to make the allotment of women an extremely sore point. The story of the battle over one woman is worth reporting, as it illustrates both patterned interpersonal relationships and the ways in which anger could be expressed and channeled.

578 584 154 Three men wanted to marry Kuyafi, a widow with a child. They were Oirupa the sorcerer, Mayuva, her sister's husband, and Nitvary. Kuyafi, it was said, had once had a child by Nitvary, so his claim was a strong one. So also was Mayuva's, as he had recognized sexual rights over her

[9] Cf. Galvão 1960, p. 383.

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because she was his sister-in-law. Mayuva, however, was afraid of Nitvary, as the latter had close ties with the Kamayurá and had threatened Mayuva with witchcraft at their hands. After Nitvary returned from a trip to the Kamayurá village, Mayuva complained of severe headaches and said he was going to die. Although he denied to Quain that his condition was due to Kamayurá sorcery, the threats against him apparently had the desired result: a short time later Kuyafi moved into Nitvary's house. The union last only two days, for Nitvary's jealous wife drove her out in a fit of anger. The field, it would seem, was clear for Oirupa, the third suitor.

Oirupa, however, had been trying to marry Kuyafi for years. Her father, Matiwana, refused to give his consent and Oirupa, in revenge, was said to have killed two of Matiwana's children by witchcraft. Relations between their families were understandably strained, and they were further aggravated by the marriage of Matiwana's son Yati and Oirupa's sister Kerami, which occurred during Quain's stay. This union was unhappy and short-lived. When Kerami left him, Yati and his father held Oirupa and his co-resident affinals, Tun and Aloari, responsible. Yati bitterly asserted that he (and Matiwana) would go to live among his mother's people, the Kuikuru of the upper Kuluene. There, he said, women were much easier to get.

With this background of conflict and suspicion, it is not surprising that the quarrel again broke out in earnest when Oirupa tried to seduce Kuyafi. Angered by her rejection he threw *piqui* pits at her. In the afternoon Matiwana spoke out against Oirupa from his house. (This was proper behavior, since a parent is expected to take his offspring's part in such disputes.) That evening the two men indulged in the usual loud shouting and wrestled with barely restrained hostility. Kuyafi added her bit from the house as did another of Matiwana's daughters. The other men pretended indifference. Yati remained silent, although he was vitally interested in the dispute; for, besides being Matiwana's son, he was involved in an enduring respect relationship with his former brother-in-law, even after his marriage was dissolved. Public opinion, however, was on the side of Matiwana, for Oirupa had committed an offense by hitting Kuyafi with the pits, and he had also threatened to use witchcraft. To this last Matiwana tauntingly replied that had Oirupa's witchcraft been really effective, he would have been dead long ago. As of the time Quain left the Trumaí, Kuyafi's future was still undecided.

The Men's Circle

The men's circle served a number of functions. It was the place in which initiated males gathered, talked, argued, and smoked. It was not taboo to young boys, as it was to women, but youngsters rarely joined

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still too young to "see," but that when he was older he would learn, since his father was a shaman. Aloari said that he, too, would learn when he was old, as would his son Tsirikoan. Matiwana would instruct Aloari and would receive a payment for this tutelage. Indicative of a possible looseness of inheritance was the fact that Matiwana's son Yati was nowhere mentioned as a prospective shaman.

Dreams were considered to be a way of "seeing" while sleeping. This was known as *ohltaxer*. Dreams were taken seriously, at least by the dreamer. Aloari fully believed that the Waurá would come after he had dreamed it. And Maibu was convinced that he should make the trip to the Indian post on the Paranatinga River because he had dreamed that Climaco, the agent, liked him very much and would give him a rifle. However, individual dreams were not a matter of community concern or interest. Village action was taken on the basis of shamanistic "seeing" only.

Witchcraft

The only known sorcerer in the Trumaí village was Oirupa, the brother-in-law of Aloari. Oirupa was said by one man to have learned witchcraft (*okei*) from the Nahukwa, who, with the other Cariban tribes, were dreaded for their black magic. Oirupa's knowledge made him one of the most hated men in the village, but no action was taken against him for fear of incurring his enmity. Also, there have been no reports of the execution of sorcerers in the upper Xingú, and, from all indications, this mode of retaliation is not customary.

When someone fell ill and witchcraft was suspected, the guilt was usually imputed to a neighboring tribe. It was said that the Trumaí had to leave their old village site near the Kamayurá because the latter were killing them off with witchcraft. Sorcery was probably often practiced against other groups by the Trumaí, and the converse was always feared. Oirupa refused to speak above a whisper one night when the Auetí were said to be using black magic on the Trumaí.

It was Quain's belief that witchcraft was a substitute for open violence among the people of the area; significantly, witchcraft was not practiced by the people of the upper Xingú against the Suyá and other hostile tribes outside the Basin.[4] Intertribal black magic functioned as a check upon violence within the village as well. Certainly, it was more conducive to social order to attribute sorcery to another tribe than to some member of the small and already disrupted Trumaí community.

[4] Cf. Galvão 1949; Oberg 1953.

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105 182 648 in the Trumaí community, for, as Oberg notes, no adult male would choose to live with a people of such low status.[1]

105 162 It might be expected that the Trumaí could have compensated for this drain by raising their birth rate. However, in this population of 43 persons, there were only ten children, an extremely small number when the low average life span is considered. Furthermore, only two of the children were females. Of the approximately twelve women who 105 were capable of bearing children, only one was pregnant, and the others 163 were urging her to abort her child. Thus, infanticide and abortion were 161 taking a heavy toll in the Trumaí village.

847 845 The custom of killing twins and of spacing births three or four years apart are reported by Oberg for the Kamayurá,[2] and these factors may well have been present in the Trumaí situation. The long post-natal [171] taboo on sexual intercourse had the same effect. Wagley, who studied the dying but equally unacculturated Tapirapé, found that traditional practices were contributing to the complete depopulation of that group also.[3]

105 161 178 154 But among the Trumaí there is still another and less tangible dimension. Abortion may have been urged on a pregnant woman because she had no husband, but how is one to explain the killing of two of Aloari's children without his consent, or the fact that there were eight male and only two female children in the community? The limited information available suggests that the Trumaí were purposely restricting their number and committing suicide, perhaps unintentionally, in the process. Two reasons for this extreme behavior may be hypothesized: first, the impasse in which the Trumaí found themselves because of the steady depopulation made them so personally insecure and apathetic regarding both the present and the future that they were no longer willing to rear sizable families, despite their evident devotion to children; and second, they may not have thought it possible to produce the surplus necessary to support such families. Actually, however, even with their diminished numbers the Trumaí could have increased their food supply.

105 511 433 226 Their lowered standard of living was due to more than attitudes. Loss of population no doubt also decreased the yield of Trumaí fishing and therefore limited their chief source of protein. To be sure, bow and arrow fishing was little affected, but fish poisoning, the only communal subsistence technique practiced by them, was much less effective when employed by a small group, for a few people can adequately poison only smaller watercourses and branches of lagoons, while a greater number can cover larger streams and whole lagoons. In the latter circumstance, both the take would be larger and larger species would be available. Moreover, when the waters are heavily poisoned and enough people are present to reap the "harvest," there is less chance of fish escaping. Thus, up to

[1] Oberg 1953, p. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 62. [3] Wagley 1940.